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2 NOVEMBER 1912

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SUPPLEMENT.

LONDON: 2 NOVEMBER, 1912.

THE PAPERS OF AN EXQUISITE.

'At Prior Park, and other Papers.' By Austin Dobson. London: Chatto and Windus. 1912. 6s.

MR. DOBSON'S new book is only to be distinguished from its predecessors in prose by the connoisseur. The ingredients are almost all the same, the effect exactly the same. He writes of Prior Park, the residence of Ralph Allen, in some sort the original of Fielding's Squire Allworthy; of Stowe, the home of the Temples; of two eighteenth-century portrait painters, Carmontelle, the cobbler's son, who became "Ordonnateur des fêtes en général" to the "Gros Duc" d'Orléans; Louthembourg R.A., a Frenchman, who lived to paint Howe's victory over the French off Ushant in 1794; of Garrick abroad; of two lately-discovered letters from Fielding; of Robert Lloyd, the friend of Churchill, the friend of Wilkes; of Mason, Gray's biographer and author of "Caractacus"; of the Bailli de Suffren, Vice-Admiral of France and a considerable disturber of English comfort in the Bay of Bengal, 1782-1783.

At first sight it might be thought that Mr. Dobson's task had only been to cement innumerable tiny facts. His opinions are few and they are mild. It is very characteristic of him to say, after asking "Which is right?" that a not unreasonable answer would be both. Seldom does he so obviously call attention to himself as when he concludes the paper on Lloyd by saying: "His melancholy story exemplifies most of those ills which his great contemporary had gloomily declared to be the allotted portion of letters:

'Toil, Envy, Want, the Patron, and the Jail'."

But he was spared the Patron.

And even here the sneer at the Patron is both stale and dubious, and is allowed to conceal the fact that Lloyd did not know what envy was, because he never felt it and died too young and too obscure to inspire it. Sometimes for pages together it is uncertain and it is immaterial whether Mr. Dobson is quoting or not. In certain pages the phrase "amused themselves consumedly" counts for happy, and is almost startling. How quiet and immobile are the pages where "unsatisfactory" is the epithet for Richard Savage!

But the careful reader can disinter the modest author from these accumulations of his learned leisure. He stands out, for example, very clear, and perhaps alone, in praising as beautiful the quatrain which Gray added to the epitaph of Mason's wife in Bristol Cathedral:

"Tell them, though 'tis an awful thing to die,
('Twas ev'n to thee) yet the dread path once trod,
Heav'n lifts its everlasting portals high,
And bids 'the pure in heart behold their God'."

Finding an opponent to the third line in Hurd, Mr. Dobson makes room to defend the imagery as "legitimately Biblical" and to remark that "it is fortunate that Mason did not avail himself of Gray's generous permission to 'make another' line in its place if he pleased". The author again stands out shadowy but distinct in the essay on Stowe, where he "almost" thinks that Pope's "Odious! in woollen! 'twould a saint provoke!" was suggested by a passage in one of Lord Cobham's letters to the poet; and nevertheless he is modest enough to insert a note showing that the sentiments attributed in that line to Mrs. Oldfield "are but an echo of those of 'Lady Brumpton' in Steele's 'Funeral', 1701, a comedy in which Mrs. Oldfield had herself taken a minor part". This note is a good example of the tiny facts and conjectures which Mr. Dobson, with the patience of the coral polyps, has accumulated into a by no means tiny structure. His cement is admirable. Once or twice the sentences fall a little short of grace through the excess of minute material over the author's vitality, but very rarely.

That there is not enough vitality to do more than supply the cement is, however, not a fatal defect, because much of the material here is good in itself. The new letters from Fielding, for example, written on the voyage to Lisbon and from Portugal, act as more than spice. In fact a sentence like that one where he tells his brother—"a Lover of this Liquor when mixed with a Proper Number of Middlesex Turneps, as you use of Port Wind [sic] well mixed likewise"—that he is sending cider from Torbay, would be too much for any quiet context that was less exquisite than the author's, who writes on his title page: "Ne nous servons point de paroles plus grandes que les choses".

PROLEGOMENA TO A HISTORY OF DISSENT.

"The Early English Dissenters." By Champlin Burrage. Two vols. Cambridge: At the University Press. 1912. 20s. net.

ENGLISH Church history as a whole cannot be said to be satisfactorily studied unless the story of Dissent is fully and fairly presented." This observation is obviously true. We might even go further and contend that for the correct understanding of the whole spiritual history of the English people, from the Reformation onwards, it is essential that the inner movements and tendencies which issued in the various forms of Dissent should be thoroughly investigated. Hitherto, however, it has been a matter of great difficulty to procure trustworthy information on this subject. The historians of the English Church have regarded it as lying outside of their province, while Nonconformist writers have been content, for the most part, to rely for their facts on second-hand authorities, and further—perhaps not unnaturally—have failed to present such facts as are well established with the dispassionateness and discriminating accuracy which the serious student of history demands. Hence our knowledge of English Dissent, particularly of its origins, is both limited in extent and doubtful in quality. Facts have been misrepresented, intentionally and unintentionally, and a body of tradition has sprung up and been widely accepted, of which the historical basis is, to say the least, highly precarious. There is certainly here a magnificent opportunity for the judicious historian. A critical history of English Dissent, which should not only display the facts but give us some insight into the spirit which lay behind the facts—a history of Dissent written with sympathy but without partiality or controversial bias—would be of real service at the present time.

Such a history has still to be written. Mr. Burrage has done much to prepare for it, however, in his laborious and learned work on "The Early English Dissenters". The book covers only a comparatively short period—from the middle of the sixteenth to the middle of the seventeenth century—and even of this period it does not profess to be an exhaustive history. The author's design has been rather to supply omissions and to correct misconceptions in the light of recent research, and he has avoided as far as possible the discussion of subjects which, in his judgment, have already been adequately treated. His book has thus the character of a critical introduction rather than of a systematic history. It is intended not for the general public but for scholars, and it austere discards the graces and embellishments of narrative that appeal to the casual reader. The critical and historical qualities of the work are so excellent, however, that it may safely be predicted that for many years to come all serious students of the origins of Dissent will find it indispensable.

In the first volume Mr. Burrage exhibits and discusses a great mass of evidence bearing on obscure or disputed points in the early history of Nonconformity. Much of this evidence is here printed for the first time. Mr. Burrage has been indefatigable in his researches, and as the reward of his labours he has been enabled to throw fresh light on many apparently trifling but really signifi-

cant details which have hitherto been misconceived. His aim has been to base himself on primary authorities, wherever possible; and in the sifting and use of the available material he has shown throughout admirable judgment and discrimination. The selected bibliography which is given in the introduction will be of great assistance to those who are studying the subject. The second volume consists of documents illustrative of the history of Early English Dissent. Since the original texts are in most cases inaccessible, or at least difficult to reach, or, when reached, to decipher accurately, Mr. Burrage's reproductions are exceedingly welcome.

Mr. Burrage has published a work which will be of first-rate importance to all who are interested in the technicalities of his subject. We venture to hope that at some future time he will gather up the results of his more special researches and write, for the edification of a larger circle of readers, the much-needed History of English Dissent—an undertaking for which his profound knowledge and great historical abilities appear to qualify him.

FIELDS OF VISION.

"London Lavender." By E. V. Lucas. London: Methuen. 1912. 6s.

IN a choice of mottoes is the beginning of wisdom. Mr. Lucas opens his latest book with a selection of four, and the one we like best was found by him in an optician's catalogue. "Across the field of vision" is a phrase hitherto sacred to the makers of eye-glasses, but it serves particularly well to introduce "London Lavender", which, it is to be remembered, holds but distant cousinship to the common novel. The author himself describes it as "an entertainment", but, though the term is good enough, it does not give a definition, for to sundry kinds of people it may suggest anything from a really good street fight to a conscientious inspection of Westminster Abbey. To describe exactly how the book did entertain us is to refer to a pleasure which most people enjoy in secret and with a certain hesitancy arising from shame. It is, in fact, a joy invariably stolen; it is the eternal fascination of the house opposite. Across the street they may be leading lives precisely similar to our own, but there is always the chance that they are not, and sometimes, when our own lights are turned out, the other person's lighted window can seem wonderfully attractive. The peep-show is open without the payment of a penny, and the spectator waits in the hope of romance or farce. If either were provided for more than about two minutes shame might compel us to draw down the blinds, but the lighted square does not allow much to be seen, and the figures which pass constantly in and out of the field of vision continue to attract by their elusiveness. Hints of their ways of life are given, and the never acted romances and farces are constantly suggested to the imaginative watchers. Moments come, of course, when there is an utterly foolish craving to ring at a front-door bell and to demand a continuation of the story, but, that being happily forbidden, the attraction continues, and the spectator is in his seat the next night. It would be unjust to say that all this is a matter of mere inquisitiveness, for it really shows that, having grown accustomed to our own lives, we are seeking entertainment from anything which to us is unusual and elusive, and is yet real and familiar, as stage plays are not. Much in this way does Mr. Lucas hold us. All the best part of his book deals with a house in London, where apartments are let, and with the five sets of lodgers and some of their friends. There is a socialist, and a sentimentalist, and a maker of cinematograph films; and a married couple and at least two pairs of engaged lovers are also to be met. Further afield there is a keeper from the Zoological Gardens, with his old woman and his adopted children, which are apes.

In the end it would be too much to say that any of these people really matter to the reader, although each

one of them has in turn captured interest and sympathy. We were interested when some of them started an eating-house, where cold chops were to be the sole provender, but the author did not tell whether the scheme was a success, and, in the same way, delightful as had been the love affairs of Ann and Adolphus, their recorded marriage was a matter of small moment, while their unrecorded after-life does not matter in the least. If Mr. Lucas ever gives us another glimpse of these lives we shall be glad, but we want no finality in the entertainment, for, though the square through the lighted window is fascinating, the whole room is doubtless as commonplace as our own. Here, of course, lies the chief difference between "London Lavender" and the novel in which the author has endeavoured to create an interest in the fate of people or in the solution of problems, yet the book, though it is for an idler's hours, is full of snatches of rather unusual wisdom, which are like to remain long after Ann and Adolphus have settled down to a life which will be of interest to themselves alone, or, perhaps, to nobody. And about the aphorisms of Mr. Lucas there is this thing strange, that though each of them is perfectly new, they come from a knowledge of things known to all, and every one of them is an axiom. Like the people in the house opposite, they have always been there, but it is only now that they come into the field of vision.

LONDON'S WASTAGE.

"London's Underworld." By Thomas Holmes. London: Dent. 1912. 7s. 6d. net.

HUMAN parsons, like Father Dolling, whose lives have been lived in close contact with the very poor, were constant in deploring the waste of good material that went on all around them. Boys and girls leave school at an age when discipline and training are only just beginning to tell, and in two years' time have forgotten most of what they learnt. The working boy's brain goes to rust in an extraordinarily short time. Youths who need discipline and good food to enable them to develop into useful citizens drift into casual work or into gaol. Bad housing and bad and insufficient food in both town and country afford opportunities for consumption to develop. In proportion to population, there are probably more cases of phthisis in Wiltshire, say, than in West Ham. Sanatoria in England have been by no means a conspicuous success; they would hardly be needed if the poor had more opportunities for procuring fresh food and fresh air.

The keynote of Mr. Holmes' book lies in the word "opportunity". In common with most of those who have lived amongst the poor he is an optimist, for he knows the ability and the grit, the generosity and the heroism that lie hid in the underworld. A girl went to service in the West End of London, and on her Sunday off heard a sermon by a well-known socialistic cleric on "Environment". "I don't like the vicar at the new church", she wrote to one of her friends in East London; "he says that the poor cannot be good because they live in bad houses. I know my mother lives in a bad street, but she is a very good woman." Mr. Holmes is well acquainted with the bad streets, and traces most of the evils of the poor to the "bad houses"; but he is too honest an observer to make them the slaves of their surroundings. In the dull mosaic of vice and misery which his pages reveal there are glints of gold, the devotion of the good mothers of whom the girl spoke, working sometimes long into the night at match-box making, or shirt machining, or trouser finishing (one penny an hour and find your own cotton), that the children may be fed and the rent paid. The doctors in the East End give the women on the whole a better character than the men. They have to work harder, washing, mending, darning, cooking, nursing, marketing for an ever-increasing household; often with little sympathy from their husbands. At the close of the last dock strike

a stevedore remarked that he was sorry it was over, as he could have stood out for another three months. The sight of his wife at an upstairs window washing and ironing from morning to night revealed the secret of his persistence. No wonder that the majority of dock labourers' wives were against the strike.

Opportunities, if given, should begin with childhood. At S. Saviour's, Poplar, Father Dolling finally concentrated all his energies on feeding, clothing, and training his children, and, above all, caring for them after they left school. Mr. Holmes quotes from the report of the medical officer of the Education Committee, recommending that meals at cost price should be provided for those elementary school children who choose to pay for them, a principle which has been most successfully applied in schools of a higher grade. He considers that the school age should be raised to sixteen. A proposal such as this would, of course, meet with considerable opposition from the majority of parents, but the Labour party are in favour of raising the school age, and if one meal a day, and possibly a pair of boots, were provided at cost price, the parents' opposition might be overcome. The two most important chapters in "London's Underworld" are those dealing with the tramp class and the prison system. The author believes that the Salvation Army has utterly failed to raise the "submerged". It has spent thousands of pounds on methods which he considers have proved themselves absolutely ineffectual. The parks still have their plague spots, the Embankment (until the recent police order) was still thronged, the unemployed are still with us in spite of elevators and shelters and daily doles of soup and bread. A word might have been said for the emigration work of the Army. The dwellers on the Embankment and the tramps who journey from casual ward to casual ward are for the most part defective in mind and body, unwilling and unable to do regular work. Out of a congregation of three hundred or four hundred men of the tramp class brought together every Friday afternoon in an East End church by a certain society which ministers to the spiritual needs of these wayfarers, there are hardly any able-bodied men. Yet some are communicants, and one at least has become a member of an English religious community. It is impossible not to feel pity for these people. "It is the cold we feel most", said one of them to the present writer; "most of us lives on the bread we gets at the convent at Hammer-smith; if we gets a cup of warm tea it seems to put new life into us." Yet one who lived a tramp's life for a time has told us that it is the shortest road to utter shamelessness of character. Mr. Holmes believes that true pity would sweep away the common shelters, clear the Embankment and parks, organise special colonies for vagrants, board and train their children in cottage homes, and detain the feeble-minded, instead of letting them wander at large to propagate their kind.

The chapter headed "In Prison Oft" deals with reforms in the prison system. Here Mr. Holmes is on ground which is peculiarly his own, and his suggestions are very valuable. He thinks that there is a very close connexion between neglected infirmity, mental and physical, and crime, and that the present rule which leaves prison and prison alone for the defective in mind and body is a cruel and stupid one. No boy from eight years up to sixteen, unless physically and mentally sound, can enter a reformatory or industrial school. No prisoner under twenty-one years of age, if he be in any degree defective, is allowed the benefits of Borstal training. The result is that our prisons are filled with weaklings, and the nation is assured of a continuous prison population. Prison and prison only is the place for the afflicted poor. Mr. Holmes suggests the establishment of a colony for the defective in some corner of the British Empire where regular food, work, and air would, he thinks, work wonders. Again, the growing custom amongst magistrates of inflicting fines with the alternative of a few days' imprisonment falls with great hardship on the very poor. The fine often has to be paid at once, and the few shillings are as hard to find as pounds. So a boy

goes to prison for bathing in a dock, ditch, or riding a cycle without a light, or playing football in the streets. Once in prison the boy finds it not so black as it is painted, but his work, his character, and his dread of prison have gone, and he is more than likely to return again. Amongst other suggestions Mr. Holmes thinks that time should be given to pay fines and that they might be paid in instalments. "Weekly payments taken" is a familiar notice in the East End shops.

Mr. Holmes has written a very valuable book. It is not easy reading, for almost any chapter might easily develop into a volume, and the writer's kinematic illustrations sometimes confuse the points of his lecture. But they are taken from life by one who has had time to grasp the meaning of that which he has seen. Perhaps he holds that the improvement of the race is much more a physical than a moral problem, when it is of course both. He does less than justice to the never-ceasing work of the Church and of settlements like Oxford House. There is no mention at all of Roman Catholic work. The Church Lads Brigade, the Boy Scouts, and the Cadet Corps are certainly touching more than he thinks, and introducing just that discipline and esprit de corps and sense of ideals which boyhood welcomes, and which are so conspicuously lacking in the underworld. Father Dolling used to send his hooligan boys into the Army and Navy with the best results, and established a Cadet Corps at Poplar, with uniforms which put the ragamuffins on an equality with the better off. But when all this has been said there is a curious and striking likeness between the most distinguished of police court missionaries and the most famous of mission priests. It cannot be better expressed than by comparing passages from the Winchester missionary's life with the lines in which Mr. Holmes makes his confession of faith. "I see some of the heights and depths to which humanity can ascend or descend. I have learned that the greatest factors in life are kindly sympathy, brotherly love, a willingness to believe the best of the worst, and to have an infinite faith in the ultimate triumph of good."

NOVELS.

"Roddles." By B. Paul Neuman. London: Murray. 1912. 6s.

If romance be a thing all of gay colours, then must we seek it in vain through the pages of Mr. Neuman's book. The author takes us to the places which are not in the sun. He is relentless; he keeps us, as it were, in an ill-lit corner of the world until our eyes are only useful for seeing in the dark, and, in the end, when he turns on us the first ray of light, we are uncertain whether it proceeds from a big street-lamp or from some other source. Yet we think that "Roddles" should most certainly be classed as a romance, little as it contains of the ingredients usually found in that class of fiction. There are tears in this book, but they will never form pearls as they fall; their mark will be like that of a drop of rain which has splashed against a grimy pane of glass. But they are tears all the same. Roddles himself was a tailor, a dirty little man who sometimes drank to excess and found his other chief pleasure in mocking at the things which he did not understand. He knew that his own life was worthless, and he cared nothing for it; but he had great ambitions for his two sons. They had to become gentlemen living in houses in Cromwell Road, and thither they went, driven along the road by his strap at first, and afterwards by County Council scholarships and the other things which, in fiction at least, always aid poor boys to follow in the footsteps of Dick Whittington. He would never have excused them had they failed, but he could not brook success. Clothes made in Bond Street seemed an insult to the little tailor who lived at the back of Fetter Lane. At first he had cut himself adrift from his boys because he feared to stand in their way, but in the course of time he came to hate both them and their worldly success. When

Roddles brought himself to destitution through his increasing craving for drink he came to the conclusion that as he did not enjoy life he might as well end it, and then he met "Big-Lou", the Salvation lass. In the end he and she and a few others march down Cromwell Road, "all together, all washed, all 'appy. Glory! 'Allelujah!" The sons see him from their window, but they do not understand fully, for happiness was the one thing which neither the parental strap nor those County Council scholarships won for them. Roddles found it, but then he was an extraordinarily romantic person, as are all those with imaginative powers.

"Her Roman Lover." By Eugenia Brooks Frothingham. London: Constable. 1912. 6s.

The point of this story is that the lottery element inherent in a projected excursion into matrimony is much increased when one of the parties belongs to the Anglo-Saxon race and the other is what the author calls a Latin. Anne Warren was an American girl wintering in Rome with her aunt Mrs. Garrison, who held that opinion very strongly; and if Anne and the devoted young Roman to whom she became engaged are to be taken as types of their respective nationalities the elder lady's view was certainly supported by the course of true love in their case. There may, we think, have been an occasional Anglo-Saxon who was Latin enough to be jealous of the male friend of his fiancée's youth when the latter gentleman, however correct in his demeanour, was yet unmistakably in love with her. But the tale is prettily told and has a word for the good qualities of North and South alike; and we finish it with every reason to believe that Jack, the American friend of her early days, will presently come to take Anne home in a somewhat extended sense of his remark on the last page.

"The Golden Guard." By the Countess of Cromartie. London: Allen. 1912. 6s.

There is a dynasty and a mysterious preface to lead us into the story. There is much talk of Phœnician and Milesian, of Picts, of Tyrian eyes and wine, and of the worship of Baal. But there is nothing suggestively Phœnician in the story which would enable one to connect it with any period, even as far back as the Amarna tablets take us, and the oft-repeated references to Baal, as though there were some particular deity of that name, betray an ignorance that the word with Canaanite or Phœnician was not a proper name, but an appellative, and suggest that the scene is not intended to have much reference to historic reality. One may say, indeed, that it supplies very little else than a setting for a long series of passionate love scenes between Heremon the Beautiful, King of Phœnicia, and his slave girl. There are occasional references to the King's departure to or return from distant wars, but these only serve as a prelude to the amorous interludes with which the book monotonously abounds. The style and the author's too apparent admiration for her puppets only serve to increase the impression of monotony.

"The Mystery of Redmarsh Farm." By Archibald Marshall. London: Stanley Paul. 1912. 6s.

No doubt it is chiefly due to a praiseworthy anxiety on the author's part to keep the promise of this story's title throughout fifty-six chapters that it takes so many before "we leave Redmarsh Farm with the dark shadow that had rested on it lifted at last". The detective from Scotland Yard, Mr. Chinnering, of course gets upon a false scent to begin with, and the amateur methods of Edward Knightly—the surname speaks for itself—in clearing up the mysterious disappearance of Barbara's little brother are characterised by a modest deliberateness. But no novel-reader who is "out for" mystification will complain of an author who gives him a good run for his money. Mr. Marshall certainly does this, and the details of his intricate plot are carefully thought out.

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